

**SANCTUARY ADVISORY
COUNCIL**



*Lee Whitford, Chair
Casey Dennehy, Vice-Chair
Steve Shively, Secretary*

March 26, 2021

Superintendent Carol Bernthal
115 E Railroad Ave, Suite 301
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Representation

- *Citizen-At-Large*
- *Commercial Fishing*
- *Conservation*
- *Education*
- *Marine Business*
- *Outer Coast Marine Resource Committees*
- *Research*
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- *Hoh Tribe*
- *Makah Tribe*
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- *Quinault Indian Nation*
- *Local Government:*
 - *Clallam County*
 - *Jefferson County*
 - *Grays Harbor County*
- *Washington State:*
 - *Dept. of Ecology*
 - *Dept. of Fish and Wildlife*
 - *Dept. of Natural Resources*
- *NOAA Fisheries*
- *Olympic National Park*
- *U.S. Coast Guard*
- *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*
- *U.S. Geological Survey*
- *U.S. Navy*

Dear Superintendent Bernthal,

I am writing as chair of the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council. We request that you support the governor's budget proposal to fund Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's European green crab monitoring and removal efforts over the 2021-2023 biennium. The Advisory Council also endorses the Washington Sea Grant partnership proposal "Invasive European Green Crab – A Real Threat to Washington's Coastal Resources" for an additional \$1.2 million to continue monitoring and removal of the invasive European green crab.

Invasive European green crabs are a threat to Washington's lucrative shellfish industry by competing with native species and damaging habitat. The Washington outer coastal shellfish industry is valued at more than \$20 million in ex-vessel value annually for Dungeness crab. Monitoring and removal of invasive European green crabs will protect more than 2,000 tribal and non-tribal commercial fishing and processing jobs supported by the Washington shellfish industry. Populations of these invasive species already require trapping on the Makah reservation and in Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay. In the future, additional funding will likely be needed to expand assessment and management of this threat to Washington's shellfish industry and coastal jobs.

Thank you for your support of these current budget requests which will help protect the health and welfare of our coastal resources and communities.

Sincerely,

Lee Whitford, Chair
Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

The opinions expressed in this letter do not reflect the views of Federal agencies represented on the sanctuary advisory council. Additionally, the council is an advisory body to the sanctuary superintendent, and as such the opinions and findings of this letter do not necessarily reflect the position of the sanctuary and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Artwork: David Sones